

Delta Science Plan

Summary: Dr. Peter Goodwin, Lead Scientist for the Delta Science Program, will present the first complete draft of a Delta Science Plan for Council review. This plan is a recommendation in the Delta Plan (Recommendation G R1). Delta Science Program staff developed this draft with input from a number of science, agency, and stakeholder leaders. Staff is seeking comments from the Council and the public on the draft Science Plan and direction on completing this Delta Plan recommendation.

Introduction

Delta Science Program staff started work on the Delta Science Plan (Science Plan) in late 2012. Initial efforts included a “Town Hall Meeting” at the Biennial Bay-Delta Science Conference in October. Dr. Goodwin previously provided the Council with a detailed outline, presentations on concepts for Science Plan elements, and progress reports. His last update on the Science Plan was at the April 25, 2013 Council meeting.

The Draft Delta Science Plan includes the elements in the Delta Plan recommendation including: a collaborative institutional and organizational structure for conducting science in the Delta, provisions for synthesis, data management, modeling, monitoring, support of adaptive management, and prioritization of research. An initial assessment of financial needs for the Delta Science Program is also included.

What the Science Plan Does

One of the guiding principles for the Science plan is respect the sovereignty of agencies. It presents a collaborative approach to science which builds on the strengths of the many programs, agencies, stakeholders, consultants, and institutions that make up the Delta science community. The Science plan also incorporates processes, tools, and lessons learned elsewhere such as science practices used by the National Science Foundation and the National Center for Environmental Analysis and Synthesis.

The Science Plan:

- Establishes institutional structures that will help to develop and communicate scientific information to decision makers. Science informs decision-making – it does not make the decision. Decisions need to be based on the best available science and still incorporate a wide range of non-science factors. Scientists need to understand the needs of policy makers and need to be able to accurately and clearly explain the risks and uncertainties associated with any scientific finding.

- Identifies actions and practices needed to develop and maintain a common body of knowledge. This body of knowledge will be readily accessible and available to all. This does not mean that we all need to agree on the science. Debate and discourse can and should occur within the Science Community. Credible high quality science is established through common peer-review practices and the science process.
- Supports key science infrastructure elements such as a systematic method for prioritizing research based on system-wide needs and scientific merit, monitoring, data management, shared modeling, and science communications.
- Establishes a framework for implementation of adaptive management that is informed by the best available science. This includes creation of an adaptive management unit within the Delta Science Program. Adaptive management liaisons will be available to advise projects, programs, and agencies early in the process of developing adaptive management plans (early consultation).

Next Steps

Public comments are welcome during the entire Delta Science Plan development process. For public comment on the First Draft Delta Science Plan to be considered for incorporation in the Second Draft Delta Science Plan, comments must be received no later than Thursday, July 18, 2013. The second draft will be presented to the Delta Stewardship Council (Council) in August 2013, with a final version expected in September 2013.

At each stage of the development of the Delta Science Plan, the Delta Lead Scientist will publicly present the latest draft to the Council for the purpose of receiving information and comments from the Council and the public.

List of Attachments

Attachment 1: First Draft Delta Science Plan

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